



**action** \ak-shən\ n (14c) 1 : proceeding in a court of justice by which one demands or enforces one's right 2 : the bringing about of an alteration by force or through a natural agency 3 : the manner or method of performing: a : the deportment of an actor or speaker or his expression by means of attitude, voice, and gesture b : the style of movement of the feet and legs (as of a horse) c : a function of the body or one of its parts 4 : an act of will 5 a : a thing done : DEED b : the accomplishment of a thing usu. over a period of time, in stages, or with the possibility of repetition (an ~, the product and expression of exerted force —Thomas Carlyle) c pl : BEHAVIOR, CONDUCT (unscrupulous ~s) d : INITIATIVE, ENTERPRISE (a man of ~) 6 a : (1) : an engagement between troops or ships (2) : combat in war (gallantry in ~) b : (1) : an event or series of events forming a literary composition (2) : the unfolding of the events of a drama or work of fiction : PLOT (3) : the movement of incidents in a plot c : the combination of circumstances that constitute the subject matter of a painting or sculpture 7 a : an operating mechanism b : the manner in which a mechanism operates 8 a : the price movement and trading volume of a commodity, security, or market b : the process of betting including the offering and acceptance of a bet and determination of a winner 9 : the most vigorous, productive, or exciting activity in a particular field, area, or group (they itch to go where the ~ is —D. J. Henahan) **actionable** \ak-sh(ə)n-ə-bəl\ adj (1591) : subject to or affording ground for an action or suit at law — **actionably** \-bleē, adv **actionless** \ak-shən-ləs\ adj (1817) : marked by inaction : IMMOBILE **action painting** n (1952) : abstract expressionism marked esp. by the use of spontaneous techniques (a dribbling, splattering, or smearing) — **action painter** n **action potential** n (1926) : a momentary change in electrical potential (as between the inside of a nerve cell and the extracellular medium) that occurs when a cell or tissue has been activated by a stimulus **activate** \ak-tə-vāt\ vb -vat-ed; -vat-ing v (1626) : to make active or more active: as a : (1) : to make (as molecules) reactive or more reactive (2) : to convert (as a provitamin) into a biologically active derivative b : to make (a substance) radioactive, luminescent, photosensitive, or photoconductive c : to treat (as carbon or alumina) so as to improve adsorptive properties d : to aerate (sewage) so as to favor the growth of organisms that decompose organic matter e (1) : to set up or formally institute (as a military unit) with the necessary personnel and equipment (2) : to put (an individual or unit) on active duty ~ vi : to become active — **activation** \ak-tə-va-shən\ n — **activator** \ak-tə-vā-tər\ n **activated carbon** n (1921) : a highly adsorbent powdered or granular carbon made usu. by carbonization and chemical activation and used chiefly for purifying by adsorption — called also **activated charcoal** **activation analysis** n (ca. 1949) : analysis to determine chemical elements in a material by bombarding it with neutrons to produce radioactive atoms whose radiations are characteristic of the elements present **activation energy** n (1940) : the minimum amount of energy required to convert a normal stable molecule into a reactive molecule **active** \ak-tiv\ adj [ME, fr. MF *actif*, fr. L *actus*, pp. of *agere* to drive, do — more at AGENT] (14c) 1 : characterized by action rather than by contemplation or speculation 2 : productive of action or movement 3 a of a verb form or voice : asserting that the person or thing represented by the grammatical subject performs the action represented by the verb (*hits* in "he hits the ball" is ~) b : expressing action as distinct from mere existence or state 4 : quick in physical movement : LIVELY 5 : marked by vigorous activity : BUSY (the stock market was ~) 6 : requiring vigorous action or exertion (~ sports) 7 : having practical operation or results : EFFECTIVE (~ law) 8 a : disposed to action : ENERGETIC (~ interest) b : engaged in an action or activity (an ~ club member) 9 : engaged in full-time service esp. in the armed forces (~ duty) 10 : marked by present operation, transaction, movement, or use (~ account) 11 a : capable of acting or reacting : ACTIVATED (~ nitrogen) (~ charcoal) b : tending to progress or to cause degeneration (~ tuberculosis) c : exhibiting optical activity d of an electronic element : capable of controlling voltages or currents e : requiring the expenditure of energy (~ calcium ion uptake) 12 : still eligible to win the pot in poker 13 : moving down the line : visiting in the set — used of couples in contredances or square dances — **active** n — **actively** adv — **activeness** n **active immunity** n (1911) : usu. long-lasting immunity that is acquired through production of antibodies within the organism in response to the presence of antigens — compare PASSIVE IMMUNITY **active transport** n (ca. 1963) : movement of a chemical substance by the expenditure of energy through a gradient (as across a cell membrane) in concentration or electrical potential and opposite to the direction of normal diffusion **activism** \ak-ti-izm\ n (1915) : a doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action (as a mass demonstration) in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue — **activist** \-vəst\ n or adj — **activistic** \ak-ti-vis-tik\ adj **activity** \ak-tiv-ə-tē\ n, pl -ties (15c) 1 : the quality or state of being active 2 : vigorous or energetic action : LIVELINESS 3 : natural or normal function: as a : a process (as digestion) that an organism carries on or participates in by virtue of being alive b : a similar process actually or potentially involving mental function; specif.: an educational procedure designed to stimulate learning by firsthand experience 4 : an active force 5 a : a pursuit in which a person is active b : a form of organized, supervised, often extracurricular recreation 6 : an organizational unit for performing a specific function; also : its function or duties **act of God** (1859) : an extraordinary interruption by a natural cause (as a flood or earthquake) of the usual course of events that experience, prescience, or care cannot reasonably foresee or prevent **actomyosin** \ak-tə-myo-sin\ n [ISV *actin + -o- + myosin*] (1942) : a viscous contractile complex of actin and myosin concerned together with ATP in muscular contraction **actor** \ak-tor\ also \-tōr\ n (15c) 1 : one that acts : DOER 2 a : one who represents a character in a dramatic production b : a theatrical performer c : one that behaves as if acting a part 3 : one that takes part in any affair — **actorish** \-tōr-ish\ adj

act out *v* (1611) 1 : to represent in action (children *act out* what they read) 2 : to translate into action (unwilling to *act out* their beliefs) 2 : to express (as an impulse or fantasy) directly in overt behavior without modification to comply with social norms actress \ak'-trs\ n (1676) : a woman who is an actor Acts *Vakts*, *n pl but sing in the constr* : a book in the New Testament narrating the beginnings of the Christian Church — called also *Acts of the Apostles*; see BIBLE table actual \ak'-ch(\-t)w\ adj [ME *actuel*, fr. MF, fr. LL *actualis*, fr. L *actus* act] (14c) 1 *obs*: ACTIVE 2 : existing in act and not merely potentially b : existing in fact or reality (~ and imagined conditions) c : not false or apparent (~ costs) 3 : existing or occurring at the time : CURRENT (caught in the ~ commission of a crime) actual cash value *n* (1946) : money equal to the cost of replacing lost, stolen, or damaged property after depreciation actual-ity \ak'-ch(\-t)w-\l\st\-\t\c\, \ak'-sh\, *n pl*-ties (1652) 1 : the quality or state of being actual 2 : something that is actual : FACT, REALITY (possible risks which have been seized upon as *actualities*) — T. S. Eliot<sup>1</sup> actual-alize \ak'-ch(\-t)w-\l\z\iz\, -sh(\-t)w-\l\z\iz\, *vb -ized; -iz\ing v* (1701) 1 : to make actual ~ 2 : to become actual — *actualization* *n* actual-ly-adv \ak'-ch(\-t)w-\l\c\, -sh(\-t)w-\l\c\, *aks(h)-l\c\* (15c) 1 : in act or in fact : REALITY (nominally but not ~ independent — Karl Loewenstein) 2 : in point of fact : in truth (he ~ spoke Latin) actual-ari-al \ak'-ch(\-t)w-\l\er-\l\c\, -sh\, *adj* (1869) 1 : of or relating to actuaries 2 : relating to statistical calculation esp. of life expectancy actual-ari-al-ly \l\c\-\l\c\, *adv* actu-ary \ak'-ch\, -wer-\l\c\, -sha\, *n pl*-aries [L *actuarius* shorthand writer, fr. *actum* record — more at ACT] (1553) 1 *obs*: CLERK, REGISTRAR 2 : one who calculates insurance and annuity premiums, reserves, and dividends actu-ate \ak'-ch\-\w\at\, -sha\, *vt -ated; -at\ing* [ML *actuatus*, pp. of *actuare*, to execute, fr. L *actus* act] (1645) 1 : to put into mechanical action or motion 2 : to move to action *syn* see MOVE — *actuation* *n* \ak'-ch\-\w\at\-\sh\on\, -sha\, *n* (ca. 1864) : one that actuates; specifies : a mechanism for moving or controlling something indirectly instead of by hand act up *vi* (1903) 1 : to act in a way different from that which is normal or expected; as a : to behave in an unruly, recalcitrant, or capricious manner b : SHOW OFF e : to function improperly (this typewriter is *acting up again*) 2 : to become active or acute after being quiescent (her rheumatism started to act up) acuity \a'kyü-\t\c\, *a\l\y-n*, *pl -ties* [MF *acuité*, fr. OF *agueté*, fr. *agu* sharp, fr. L *acutus*] (1543) : keenness of perception : SHARPNESS acule-ate \a'kyü-\l\c\-\l\c\, *adj* [L *aculeatus* having stings, fr. *aculus*, dim. of *acus*] (1661) : having a sting (~ insects) acu-men \a'kyü-\m\sn, *ak-yü-men*, *n* [L *acumin*, *acumen*, lit., point, fr. *acuere*] (1531) : keenness and depth of perception, discernment, or discrimination esp. in practical matters : SHREWDNESS *syn* see DISCERNMENT acu-mi-nate \a'kyü-\ma-\n\, *adj* (1646) : tapering to a slender point acu-pres-sure \a'kyü-\p\-\r\, -presh\ur\, *n* (1859) : SHIATSU acu-punc-ture \a'p\nt(k)\-char\, *n* [L *acus* + E *puncture*] (ca. 1860) : an orig. Chinese practice of puncturing the body (as with needles) at specific points to cure disease or relieve pain (as in surgery) — *acupuncture* *n* \a'p\nt(k)\-cha-\rost\, *n* acute \a'kyü\, *adj acu\er; acu\est* [L *acutus*, pp. of *acuere* to sharpen, fr. *acus* needle; akin to L *acer* sharp — more at EDGE] (14c) 1 *a* : characterized by sharpness or severity (~ pain) (an ~ infection) (2) : having a sudden onset, sharp rise, and short course (~ disease) 2 : ending in a sharp point: as a : being or forming an angle measuring less than 90 degrees (~ angle) b : composed of acute angles (~ triangle) 3 *a* : marked by keen discernment or intellectual perception esp. of subtle distinctions : PENETRATING (an ~ thinker) b : responsive to slight impressions or stimuli (~ observer) 4 : felt, perceived, or experienced intensely (~ distress) 5 : seriously demanding urgent attention (an ~ housing shortage) 6 *a* of an accent mark : having the form *b* : marked with an acute accent *c* : of the variety indicated by an acute accent — *acute ad* — *acute-ness* *n* *syn* ACUTE, CRITICAL, CRUCIAL mean of uncertain outcome. ACUTE stresses intensification of conditions leading to the culmination or breaking point; CRITICAL adds to ACUTE implications of imminent change, of attendant suspense, and of decisiveness in the outcome; CRUCIAL suggests a dividing of the ways and often a test or trial involving the determination of a future course or direction. *syn* see in addition SHARP acy-clic (\a'k\i-\slik, -sik-\lik) *adj* (1878) 1 : not cyclic; esp : not disposed in cycles or whorls 2 : having an open-chain structure; esp : ALIPHATIC (an ~ compound) acyl \a's\al\, *n* [ISV, fr. *acid*] (1901) : a radical derived usu. from an organic acid by removal of the hydroxyl from all acid groups ad \a\d\, *n, often attrib* (1841) 1 : ADVERTISEMENT 2 : ADVERTISING ad \a\d\ (1947) : ADVANTAGE 4 ad- or ac- or af- or ag- or al- or ap- or as- or at- *prefix* [ME, fr. MF, OF & L; MF, fr. OF, fr. L, fr. ad — more at EDGE] 1 : to : toward — used as before c, k, or q (*acculturation*) and af: before f and ag: before g (*age*, grade) and al- before l (*affiliation*) and ap- before p (*approximate*) and as- before s (*assuage*) and at- before t (*artune*) and ad- before other sounds but sometimes ad- even before one of the listed consonants (*adsorb*) 2 : near; adjacent to — in this sense always in the form ad- [*adrenal*] ad-\a\d\, *ad* *adv suffix* [L *ad*] : in the direction of : toward (cephalad) ad-age \a\d-\j\, *n* [MF, fr. L *adagium*, fr. *ad* + *-agium* (akin to *alo* say)] (1548) : a saying often in metaphorical form that embodies a common observation ad-dao (\a'däj-(\e), \ä-, -\däzh-(\e), \ä-, -\däzh-\, *adv or adj* [It, fr. *ad* to + *agio* ease, *say*]) (1724) : in an easy graceful manner : SLOWLY — used chiefly as a direction in music adagio *n, pl -gi\os* (1754) 1 : a musical composition or movement displaying difficult feats of balance, lifting, or spinning

**Adam** \ad'-əm\ n [ME, fr man and father by Eve of of man — used esp. in the or Adam-ical \i-kal\ adj] **Adam adj** [Robert Adam & 18th century decorative st lines, surface decoration, a lands and medallions) **ad-e-mance** \ad'-ə-məns\ n [ad-a-man-cy \i-mən-sē\ n [əd-adam-and-eve \ad-ə-mən-'e\ 'ad-a-mant \ad-ə-mənt\, -ma hardest metal, diamond, formerly believed to be of iron extremely hard substance **adamant adj** (1535) : unsil; UNYIELDING syn see INFIL **ad-a-man-tine** \ad-ə-'man-tē\ tinus, fr. Gk adamantinos, f having the quality of adam simbling the diamond in ha Adam's apple *n* (ca. 1775) formed by the largest cartil Adam's need *n* (1791) : any adapt \i-dap'\, a-\ vb [F or to fit, fr. aptus apt, fit] vt (1: or situation) often by modifi ed-ness *n* **syn ADAPT, ADJUST, ACCOMPLISH** one thing into correspondence according to change to the warmer climate) ADJUST correspondence or harmonism *(adjusted* the budget suggest yielding or compromise ACCOMMODATION his politics to bringing into harmony principle *(refused to conform*) RECONCILE implies the democratic congruity of things that seem what they said with what i adaptable \i-dap'-tə-bəl\, adj : SUITABLE syn see PLASTIC-ADAP-TA-TION \ad-ap'-tā-shən\ adapting : the state of being ad-apted to certain conditions: as a : adjustability \i-dap'-tə-bil-i-tē\ adv **adapter also adap-tor** \i-dap'-tər\ : a device for connecting apparatus b : an attachment intended **adaptation** \i-dap-shən\, a-\ i (1) : adaptive \i-dap-tiv\, a-\ adj or tendency toward adaptati ad-ap-tiv-ity \ad-ap-tiv-i-tē\ **adaptive radiation** *n* (1902) : adaped ancestral form with pro zed forms **Adar** \ä-där\, \ä-\ i [ME, fr. civil year or the 12th month calendar — see MONTH table **Adar Sheini** \ä-där-shé-nē\ 1901) : VEADAR **adaxial** \ä-däk-sé-äl\ adj facing the axis (as of an organ add **Adde** \äd\ vb [ME adden, fr. L addo] vt (14c) 1 : to join or improvement ( $\sim$  60 acres of cooking) 2 : to say further an equivalent simple quantit of a group *(don't forget to ~ b: to come together or unit movie will ~ to his her savings) — add-able or as ad-dax \äd-,äks\ n pl addax lope (*Addax nasomaculata*) ad-dend \äd-dənd\, \ä'dend\ i (1) be to added to another addendum \i-dēn-dəm\ n, pl gerundive of addere] (1684) pllement to a book — often us adder \äd'-ər\ n [ME, alter. addre, fr. OE nædrë: akin to O (bef. 12c) 1 : the common broadely: a terrestrial viper (American snakes (as the hognose) popularly believed to be venom adder \äd'-ər\ n (1580) : onputer) that performs addition adder's-tongue \äd-ər'-tōng\, family Ophioglossaceae) w tongue 2: DOGTOOTH VIOLET **addict** \ä-dikt'\ v [L *addictus* to say — more at DICTION] (1: to something habitually or cause to become physiological **addict** \äd-(ik)\ n (1909) : DEVOTEE (a detective novel ~*